

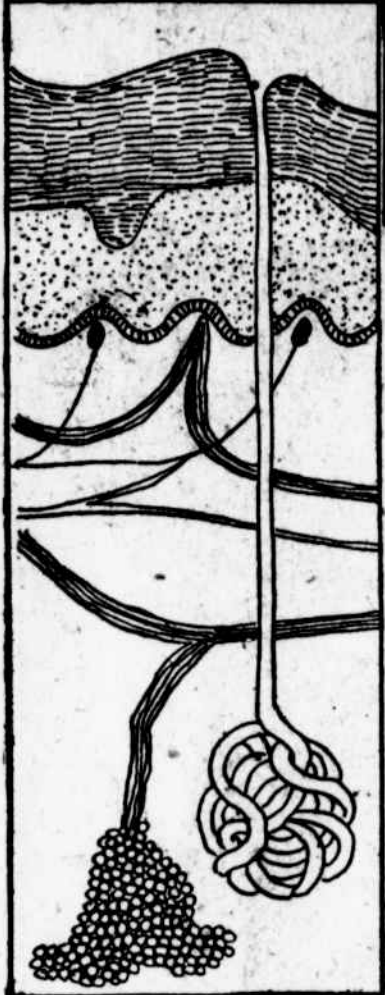
Sentenced ^{by} the Court to Wear A \$100,000 Pearl Necklace

For Thirty Days Each Year Mrs. James G. Blum Will Carry Out Judge Graham's Order---

"An Officer to Be with or Near Her at All Times to Insure Their Safe Return to This Court"



Judge Graham, of San Francisco, Who Made the Unique Decision.



A Skin Pore—Greatly Magnified—and Its Gland from Which Exudes the Excretions Which, Science Believes, Feeds and Restores "Starving" Pearls.

"In the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the City and County of San Francisco.

"Hon. Thomas F. Graham, Judge.

"In the Matter of the Estate of Rosa Blum, deceased.

"Dept. No. 10.

"THE petition of James B. Blum, one of the executors of the above estate, shows that there is in this estate in the vaults of the Anglo-California Trust Company, a certain pearl necklace of the value of approximately \$100,000; that said pearl necklace has been for some time, and is now, kept in a safe deposit box, and that by reason thereof said necklace has, and is, deteriorating and depreciating in value, and will continue to so deteriorate and depreciate unless said necklace is worn by some healthy young woman for the period of one month, at least, of each year.

"Many eminent lapidaries have given their opinion that these pearls, for lack of nourishment, will deteriorate unless worn for a certain period in each year, and the Court is asked to designate some fit, proper and healthy woman to wear this necklace during the period of one month of each year.

"After the hearing of said petition many requests to wear the pearls have come to the Court from trained nurses and other women claiming to be in such perfect health that they would be able to preserve the lustre of these valuable pearls. Their requests have been fully considered by the Court, but after seeing the petitioner's wife, Mrs. James B. Blum, I am convinced that she is sufficiently sound in body and health to wear this necklace and preserve the lustre of these valuable pearls."

"And then Judge Graham issued an order which is perhaps without parallel in any court in the history of the world. He directed that Mrs. James B. Blum should wear the \$100,000 necklace of pearls—

"For the period of one month, under the following conditions: That when they are taken from the safe deposit box and delivered to her an officer be with or near her at all times to insure their safe return to the Court.

"The reason an officer is designated to guard and protect these pearls is because of a provision in the will of Rosa Blum, whereby these pearls have been bequeathed to the first female issue of the blood of James B. Blum (who at present is thirty years of age), provided there is such issue by the time he arrives at the age of thirty-five, otherwise the said pearls are to be converted into cash and the proceeds given to the Federation of Jewish Charities of San Francisco.

"These pearls are under the protection

of the Court, and the utmost efforts to insure their safe return must be exercised.

"Dated, January 21, 1921.

"THOS. F. GRAHAM, Judge."

The curious petition which Judge Graham, of San Francisco, had before him arose from a provision in the will of the late Mrs. Rosa Blum, a very wealthy widow of the same city. Mrs. Blum left the bulk of her fortune to her son and many costly jewels to his bride. She left, too, a number of bequests to charities.

Among the elder Mrs. Blum's possessions was a very wonderful rope of pearls. At a conservative estimate they were worth at least \$100,000. There were many memories about the necklace, associations that set it apart from all the other things she owned. And when it came to the question of disposing of it, she did not quite know what to do. She did not like the idea of simply passing it on to her daughter-in-law. That seemed rather too commonplace a way to treat it.

Was there not some way that the sentimental value of the gems could be preserved? Some way of making it still stand for the romance, the unique value, that it had for her?

Mother Blum decided that there was. So she stipulated in her will that if there was a girl baby born to her son and his bride within four years that baby should have the necklace. It would be "grand-mother's pearls" to her, and the child, knowing of the precious thing which was hers, would wait eagerly for the time when she might wear it, and she would invest it with all the glamor that it deserved. All through the years it would stand for the girl child as the symbol of her emergence from young girlhood into young womanhood. That necklace, Mother Blum figured shrewdly, would stand for something in her granddaughter's heart beyond its mere monetary value.

And if no girl baby came along in those four years, then the necklace should bring comforts to the poor and afflicted. It should be sold for the Federation of Jewish Charities and many people would bless it and remember it for what it had done for them.

So it was set down in her will. And after her death the pearls were taken and placed in a safe deposit vault to await the decision of the stork.

But while inspecting the necklace recently young Mr. Blum noticed that the gems had lost some of their lustre. A faint bloom of their beauty had been wiped from them. There was a slight discoloration. They looked—"sick."

And sick they literally were, so the lapidaries that he called in to inspect them told him. Born of the tropics, imprisonment behind iron bars and steel walls was killing them. They needed light and air. But more than anything else, they told him, the gems needed contact with the soft, warm breast and neck of healthy womanhood.

It was for this that they were starving, and unless they had it, and soon, their worth and beauty would steadily and swiftly decrease.

Why such a thing should be so is one of the most curious things in nature—more curious by far than young Mr. Blum's petition to the Court when he was convinced his mother's gems needed nursing. The pearl is different from every other precious

The Beautiful Necklace of Mme. Thiers, Which Nearly "Died" in the Louvre, Paris.

stone. Diamonds, sapphires, emeralds—all the other precious stones are minerals. But the pearl is really not a stone. It is of animal origin. It grows within the oyster and animal substances enter largely into its making.

While the precious stones are as lasting as the crystal, the pearl shares the mortality of that which gave it birth. In time its animal substances dry out and die and the gem disintegrates unless some way is found of feeding it. The best and, indeed, the only way, it has been found, is by bringing the pearls in close contact with the skin of a young and healthy woman.

There the gem seems to draw in life. Its dullness disappears and the old lustre returns. It gets back the vitality and bloom it has lost. It, in a word, recovers.

There is a perfectly natural explanation for all this. It is the warmth and the secretions of the skin that replenish and stimulate the animal substances in the gem. What happens, probably, is that the oily excretions of the sebaceous glands, whose openings are the pores in the skin, actually enter into the pearls and feed them; keep them, at least, lubricated.

It will be an embarrassing situation, no doubt, for young Mrs. Blum to have a policeman at her heels all the time she is wearing the necklace. It gives rise to any number of interesting speculations. When she goes to dances will her guard have to learn how to dance so that he can be close to her in the terpsichorean windings? Or will he be content to stand at the side with his eyes glued to the gems? Invitations will, of course, have to include the policeman, and that promises complications. In their own home the necessary shadowing

will not be so bad, perhaps. But how about the theatre, the restaurants and so on? It would seem that the policeman would have to be rung in on all these festivities. Young Mr. Blum is rich and the expense won't matter, but this constant scrutiny by the eye of the law may not be at all times pleasant.

Of course, Mrs. Blum could stay home and wear her pearls. But every woman knows she won't; it would be femininely impossible.

It may comfort her to know that a French beauty has regularly for several years been subjected, for the same reasons, to even a more rigorous espionage.

She is Mme. Greuze, one of the ornaments of the French stage, who was selected to "mother" the starving pearls which Mme. Thiers, widow of the great French statesman left to the nation at her death. When the Thiers necklace was first placed in the Louvre it was worth \$250,000. It was made up of one hundred and fifty of the finest pearls ever found in the sea.

They lay in the Louvre for years, and when at last the authorities awoke to their condition they were dull and dirty looking and practically valueless.

The chief gem experts of Europe were consulted. Some of the experts advised skinning the pearls. This means peeling off the outer coats. As the pearl is built up of successive layers of matter secreted by the oyster it has as many coats as an onion, whose structure under the microscope it much resembles.

As the pearl starves it loses its lustre first from the outer coats. It dies from the outside in rather than from the inside out. Sometimes it is possible to restore the

gem's pristine brilliancy by peeling off the dead layers until the still living portion is reached. The operation is an extremely delicate and hazardous one, however, and the size of the gem is lessened, of course, according to how much of it has to be peeled off. And often, like the man in the Bible, its last state is worse than its first.

The French Government decided against this process and considered the alternative of finding some young woman whose constitution was such as to make her a "pearl mother." Also there was something about this measure particularly appealing to the French mind, and a number of very beautiful and healthy Parisiennes were examined for the privilege.

Then a serious obstacle developed. By Mme. Thiers's will it was stipulated that the necklace must never be taken from the Louvre.

How could the Government evade this explicit injunction?

In case of fire it would be necessary to remove the pearls. Wasn't this as great an emergency? After long and earnest thought the authorities decided the phrase "must never leave the Louvre" was susceptible to the interpretation "must never leave the custody of those who have the Louvre in charge."

It was, therefore, decided that the pearls could be taken from the building and could be worn by some woman to be selected, provided that whenever she wore the jewels she should be constantly in the company of one or more of the Louvre authorities delegated to that duty!

Out of scores of applicants for the honor—for so it was considered in France—the choice of the experts narrowed down to two. One of them was the Princess de Broglie, a beautiful member of the French aristocracy, and the other Mme. Greuze, an equally decorative idol of the French stage. Both were young, full of health and vitality, and proven by careful tests to be extraordinarily sympathetic to pearls. Indeed, it was shown that the Princess de

Mme. Greuze, Who by Wearing the Thiers Necklace Is Restoring It to Health.

Broglie, whose love for the gems is intense, was constantly being called upon by friends to restore theirs to health. The interesting fact that at one time she had in her possession two million dollars' worth of these sick necklaces was brought out.

But the Princess objected to the necessary espionage. This left only Mme. Greuze, who, because of her stage life, was not so sensitive. And so, for several months in the year—because the Thiers pearls were very much more starved than the Blum ones—the actress wears them. Whenever they hang around her charming neck and nestle upon her lovely breast delegates of the Louvre are close beside her watching them. When she retires and takes them off these delegates receive them and hand them to her when she arises in the morning. Under her care the Thiers necklace has almost recovered all its health and beauty. It will be a couple of more years, however, the experts believe, before it is fully restored.

Just what month in the year young Mrs. Blum shall wear Mother Blum's pearls has not been settled, and so the police detail has not been assigned yet. Nor will it be assigned immediately, because young Mrs. Blum is awaiting an interesting event which will take place within the next couple of months.

So before Summer comes the race between the stork and the auctioneer's hammer may have been settled. If it is not, there remains still a little over three years for either the one or the other to get the decision.